From: Association of Deputy District Attorneys
To: egaldamez@bakersfieldpd.us
Subject: Monday Morning Memo for May 20, 2019
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Courts & Rulings

Newsom revises proposed budget, adds 25 Superior Court judges
California Gov. Gavin Newsom yesterday released a revised proposed state budget which contains changes affecting the judiciary, including

the addition of 25 Superior Court judges. The revamped proposal evoked a favorable comment from Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, who said: "The Governor's revision to his state budget proposal reflects his deep support for our goal of achieving equal access to justice for all Californians - wherever they live..."
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Retired judges bring claims of age discrimination based on changes to assigned judges program
Three retired California state court judges have sued the Judicial Council of California and Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye claiming that changes to the state's assigned judges program, which uses retired jurists to fill judicial needs across the state, amount to illegal age discrimination.
The Recorder

Court rules immigrants can be deported for marijuana crime
A federal appeals court has ruled that California's legalization of marijuana doesn't protect immigrants from deportation if they were convicted of pot crimes before voters approved the new law in 2016. The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco denied on Friday the appeal of a woman who was convicted in 2014 of possession of marijuana for sale.
AP

No-adult-pornography probation condition invalidly imposed
The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals yesterday vacated a condition of the 10 years of supervised release, following a 25-year prison sentence, that the defendant, convicted of sexually exploiting a minor, not read or possess adult pornography. That special condition of probation, the memorandum opinion of a three-judge panel says, was improperly imposed on defendant Ricky Davis without notice.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Convicted killers from Humboldt County seek re-sentencing under California's new felony murder rule
Eight convicted killers from Humboldt County have filed petitions asking to be re-sentenced under California's new felony murder rule. Today Judge John Feeney called the cases for the eight, who are all in state prison. Seven were convicted of murder and one of voluntary manslaughter. Local attorneys have been appointed for each.
Lost Coast Outpost

Inmate's threatening grievance roils some justices
Three conservative justices balked at their Supreme Court colleagues Monday for turning down a case where a prisoner has been permitted to raise First Amendment claims over a grievance riddled with threatening language. Thomas Richey, who is serving a murder sentence in Washington state, brought the grievance against a female guard at Stafford Creek Corrections Center, saying she had improperly denied

him shower privileges.
Courthouse News

Youth must petition in trial court to gain resentencing
A minor seeking resentencing based on a retroactive statutory change in the murder statute must, like an adult defendant, file a petition in the Juvenile Court, rather than seeking relief on appeal, the Court of Appeal for this district held yesterday. The opinion by Justice Martin Tangeman of Div. Six affirms a finding by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge J. Christopher Smith that a youthful offender, R.G., committed second degree murder.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Jenner partner Kenneth Lee confirmed to Ninth Circuit Bench over Calif. Senators' objections
In a 52-45 vote, the U.S. Senate on Wednesday confirmed Los Angeles Jenner & Block partner Kenneth Lee to a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit despite the opposition of his home state California senators.
The Recorder

Accused teen killer of 8-year-old Santa Cruz girl to face adult proceedings
Madyson Middleton's accused killer stays in criminal court, for now. Adrian "A.J." Gonzalez, 19, has faced adult proceedings for most of the three years and nine months since he was charged with first-degree murder in connection with her death. Superior Court Judge John Salazar on Thursday morning ruled against a new law - Senate Bill 1391 - that bans 14- and 15-year-old offenders from the harsh penalties of California's adult criminal justice system.
Santa Cruz Sentinel

Court of Appeal rejects contention that remand would be pointless
The Court of Appeal for this district yesterday rejected the contention by the Office of Attorney General that there was no point in returning a case to a judge who was apparently unaware at the time of sentencing that he had power under a newly enacted statute to strike a firearm enhancement because the jurist had commented that the aggregate sentence was "appropriate."
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Prosecutions/Prosecutors

California law says he isn't a murderer. Prosecutors disagree.
After California changed its murder laws last fall, Neko Wilson was the first man to walk free. Mr. Wilson, 37, had been facing the death penalty for a 2009 robbery that led to the deaths of a couple in Fresno County. No one accused him of killing anyone, or even of being in the family's

home that night, but prosecutors said that he helped plan the break-in.
New York Times

The war on prosecutors
Now that there's a truce of sorts in the war on cops, the anti-incarceration Left has found a new enemy: your local district attorney. Progressive reformers still obsessing over so-called mass incarceration think that the best way to reduce imprisonment is to curtail the power of prosecutors' offices. They believe that prosecutors caused the prison buildup and that DAs persist in maximizing incarceration even though crime is down.
National Review

LAPD officer charged with workers' comp fraud
An LAPD officer has been charged with workers' compensation fraud after allegedly lying under oath about participating in martial arts classes while he claimed he was injured, officials announced Thursday. Mario Jacinto, 40, of Diamond Bar, faces four counts of workers' compensation insurance fraud and one count of attempted perjury under oath, according to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.
KTLA

California was ready to punish this synagogue shooter for murder. The feds want to make sure he is also punished for hating jews.
Yesterday federal prosecutors in California announced that they are charging John T. Earnest, the alleged perpetrator of last month's shooting at a synagogue near San Diego, with 108 hate crimes in connection with that attack, which killed one person and injured three others. The 19-year-old Rancho Peñasquitos resident already faced murder and attempted murder charges under state law, but the Justice Department wants to make sure he also gets punished for his anti-Semitism.
Reason.com

2 men charged with murder in purse-snatching death
Two convicted robbers are charged with running over a woman and killing her during a purse snatching in Orange County. The Los Angeles Times says Giovanni Guy and Gregory Walker were charged Friday with murder with special circumstances, making them eligible for the death penalty. It's unclear if they have attorneys. Prosecutors say the men grabbed the 31-year-old woman, threw her down and grabbed her purse Wednesday morning at Garden Grove Plaza.
AP

Driver accused of fatally hitting U.S. postal worker in Commerce is charged
A man accused of fatally hitting a postal worker who was killed while out delivering mail in Commerce last December is set to be arraigned on

Friday, prosecutors said. Ismael Eduardo Sotelo, 20, has been charged with a count of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence, according to a news release from the Los Angeles county District Attorney's Office.
KTLA

Freeway pursuit shooter charged in store co-owner's slaying has died
A man accused of gunning down the beloved co-owner of a Downey liquor store, then shooting at officers from the passenger seat of a car driven by his girlfriend in a freeway chase, has died, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Dylan Andres Lindsey, 24, of Torrance, had been hospitalized since Friday. In a statement, the department said he died from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.
NBC4

Bid for retrial dropped against ex-L.A. Councilman Alarcon, wife
Los Angeles County prosecutors have opted not to go forward with a retrial for former Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alarcon and his wife, Flora, whose convictions for fraudulent voting and perjury by declaration were reversed by a state appeals court panel. "The prosecution respects the verdicts rendered by the citizens of Los Angeles County and firmly believes that the evidence demonstrates the guilt of both defendants.
City News Service

Former DA suspected criminal wrongdoing in Orange County snitch scandal, letters reveal
As early as 2015, then-Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas acknowledged there was evidence of criminal wrongdoing on the part of sheriff's deputies and one prosecutor in the county's jailhouse informant scandal, but passed on a probe because of a potential conflict, documents show.
Orange County Register

Stan Lee's former manager charged with elder abuse against Marvel co-creator
A former business manager of Stan Lee has been charged with five counts of elder abuse involving the late Marvel Comics mogul. Los Angeles County prosecutors filed the charges Friday against Keya Morgan, 43, including felony allegations of theft, embezzlement, forgery or fraud against an elder adult, and false imprisonment of an elder adult. A warrant has been issued for Morgan's arrest.
AP

A question of intent: Attorneys lay out final arguments in Palm Springs police murder trial
The trial of John Hernandez Felix, charged with killing Palm Springs Police officers Jose "Gil" Vega and Lesley Zerebny in 2016, is winding

down. After three weeks of sometimes emotional testimony and with a death penalty sentence on the table, Felix's fate is now in the hands of the jurors. County prosecutors and Felix's attorney laid out their final arguments in the case Thursday.
Palm Springs Desert Sun

Criminal Justice / Public Safety

Officer joins the ranks of those who arrested her brothers' killers
In 2013, Cesar Perea was murdered in South Los Angeles - shot at the barbershop where he worked. With his death, he left behind his grieving sister, Jaqueline. "All I remember saying was 'my brother, they killed him,'" she said. Jackie spent years rebuilding from her tragic loss. Inspiring her journey were the same officers that helped bring the killers to justice.
NBC4

After 'cowards' threaten his family, Chris Darden withdraws as attorney for Eric Holder
A former prosecutor best known for his role in the O.J. Simpson murder trial will no longer represent a man charged with killing rapper Nipsey Hussle and injuring two other men in South Los Angeles, a judge announced Friday. Christopher Darden left the downtown Los Angeles courtroom before the case was called, but Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Teresa Sullivan noted that she granted Darden's request to withdraw from the case and appointed the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office to represent Eric Ronald Holder Jr., 29.
CBS LA

A visionary of public order George Kelling, R.I.P.
Law-abiding residents of high-crime neighborhoods keep proving George Kelling right and most of his colleagues wrong. Kelling, 83, died yesterday of cancer at his home in New Hampshire. Go to a police-community meeting in any troubled neighborhood - whether the South Side of Chicago or South Central Los Angeles - and you will rarely hear complaints about what most criminologists call "serious" crimes, such as robbery or shootings.
City Journal

'Every family ... here wants justice.' Widow of fallen Newman cop speaks at DC event
A tragedy in the small Stanislaus County community of Newman again was in the national spotlight as President Donald Trump paid tribute to the family of Cpl. Ronil Singh at the National Peace Officers' Memorial on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Reggie Singh, the corporal's brother, and Anamika Singh, his widow, spoke briefly during the ceremony Wednesday, thanking Trump after the president called them up to the dais.
Modesto Bee

Jury clears LAPD officers in $12.5-million lawsuit over man who swallowed heroin
A federal jury recently ruled five Los Angeles police officers were not liable in a $12.5-million lawsuit over a man who died after swallowing 26 grams of heroin during an arrest, City Atty. Mike Feuer announced Thursday. On June 9, 2016, two officers arrested Alex Aguilar for violating terms of a gang injunction in the Wilmington area of Los Angeles.
Los Angeles Times

Policy & Legal Issues

SF could ban facial recognition software - opinion is divided over whether that's good
San Francisco may become the first city in the country to ban municipal use of facial recognition software - a move that privacy advocates applaud but others say will outlaw a useful crime-solving tool. The Board of Supervisors will vote Tuesday on a proposal by Supervisor Aaron Peskin that would bar city departments from using the technology, except at federally regulated facilities such as the airport and port.
San Francisco Chronicle

Van Jones is making crime personal with CNN's 'The Redemption Project'
Media personality. Special green jobs advisor to President Obama. Political target. CNN "Crossfire" host. Human rights advocate. Van Jones (a.k.a. Anthony Kapel Jones) has played many roles since graduating from Yale Law School 25 years ago. His latest: host of the new CNN series "The Redemption Project With Van Jones."
Los Angeles Times

How a 16-year-old murder reached California's highest offices
On Christmas Day 2003, Matthew Sievert, the only child of a single mother and California state worker named Stepheny Milo, was removed from life support. He'd gone out to a Sacramento park the night before to meet an ex-girlfriend, and had been gunned down. He was 19. The playground where he was ambushed is five miles and a world away from the white-domed Capitol that was his mother's workplace.
CALmatters

The costs for cities contracting with Sheriff's Department can't go down much further, study finds
There isn't much room for cost cutting in the Orange County Sheriff's Department's contracts to provide police services to 13 cities, according to a long-awaited study commissioned by the communities looking to slow the annual growth of public safety expenses. "It is apparent that the opportunities for any significant contract cost savings is very limited," Yorba Linda Assistant City Manager David Christian said in a

report summarizing the study for his City Council.
Orange County Register

The cost of Riverside County Sheriff services is skyrocketing. Can Bianco reduce bills, or will cities opt to go it alone?
Sheriff Chad Bianco said financial relief is on the way to cities that hire the Riverside County Sheriff's Department for police services, following years of ballooning costs that consume growing shares of city budgets. For more than a decade, the rising costs of public safety, due in large part to officer salary and benefit increases, has been a source of contention between the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, the sheriff and cities that contract with the department for patrol and investigative services.
Palm Springs Desert Sun

The women who pioneered the use of DNA websites to unlock cold cases
In the year since the arrest of the man believed to be the notorious Golden State Killer, the world of criminal investigation has been radically transformed. Using an unconventional technique that relies on DNA submitted to online genealogy sites, investigators have solved dozens of violent crimes, in many cases decades after they hit dead ends.
Independent

Why does LAPD keep buying tasers that don't work like they should?
When Tasers work, they can take a suspect down in seconds with a single electrical jolt, incapacitating without killing. That's why the Los Angeles Police Department, which tested and pioneered the weapons, has embraced the handheld devices for nearly four decades - and it's why departments nationwide have done the same. But three years ago, the LAPD made a disturbing discovery: The department's Tasers were increasingly ineffective at subduing suspects in the field.
LAist

What happens when the science of trauma and building resilience go to prison?
The overwhelming majority of the 2.3 million people in U.S. prisons have experienced significant childhood trauma. Now a man who teaches the construction trade to prisoners believes he can, at the same time, teach those men to get to know their trauma, find resilience, and thereby change their lives.
Witness LA

Audio: Force of Law. A podcast about California's attempt to reduce police shootings
After police killed an unarmed black man in his grandparents' backyard, activists set out to change California law, hoping to make it easier to prosecute police who kill. That's sparked a heated debate in the state

Capitol between families who have lost loved ones to police and law enforcement officers who face split-second decisions while performing a dangerous job.
Force of Law

Justice Department says FDA 'lacks jurisdiction' over death-penalty drugs
The Justice Department says in a new legal opinion that the Food and Drug Administration does not have authority over drugs used in lethal injections, a stance sure to be challenged by death-penalty opponents. The department's Office of Legal Counsel said that "articles intended for use in capital punishment by a state or the federal government cannot be regulated as 'drugs' or 'devices.'"
Washington Post

How reverse-CPRA lawsuits harm the public's right to know
Instead of receiving responses to their requests for government records under the California Public Records Act, some journalists and news outlets have been served with lawsuits seeking to keep records private. This disturbing trend - known as reverse-CPRA-lawsuits - is intended to discourage the press and public from seeking records that could shed light on government activities.
Reporters Committee

Counties rarely collect fees imposed on those formerly jailed. So why keep charging them?
Anthony Robles thought things couldn't get worse. He had just gotten out of L.A. County Jail and was having trouble finding a job because of a felony conviction. His living space was in a corner of his grandmother's 500-square-foot apartment, where he rolled out his bed each night next to his small dresser. Then, things got bleaker.
Los Angeles Times

Crime

Chilean burglary gangs causing havoc in Southern California, law enforcement says
Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies throughout Southern California are joining forces to catch a new breed of brazen criminals using travel visas to enter the U.S. to loot from homes, businesses and automobiles. Dubbed by authorities as "burglary tourism," sophisticated gangs comprised of Chilean nationals are suspected of committing a string of thefts in Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Orange counties, including a $1.2 million heist in March at a Laguna Niguel jewelry store.
Orange County Register

Police say 'prolific thief' wanted to build his own cop car
The sun had yet to rise when a Los Angeles Unified School District police officer unlocked a gate to a station parking lot northeast of downtown.

As he pulled into the fenced lot about 5:30 a.m., motion detector lights blinked on, illuminating a man walking through the gate behind him. He carried a flashlight, gloves, a gun and a two-way radio as he tried breaking into eight patrol cars at the police subdivision near Wilson High School. The officer requested help.
Los Angeles Times

Homeless man charged in attack and rape of unconscious woman
A 26-year-old homeless man was charged Friday with attacking, kidnapping and raping an unconscious woman and then driving off with her car while she was still inside, prosecutors said. Allen Dante Villarreal faces charges, including kidnapping to commit another crime, rape of an unconscious person, assault with intent to commit a felony, second-degree robbery and criminal threats, according to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.
NBC4

California IRS official arrested on suspicion of accepting $5,000 bribe
An official at the Internal Revenue Service office in Long Beach was arrested Thursday, May 9, on suspicion of soliciting and accepting a $5,000 bribe. Tax compliance officer Felecia Edna Taylor, 50, of Los Angeles, had worked with the IRS since 1990, and was responsible for planning and conducting audits, prosecutors said in a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles.
Mercury News

Edwin Hiatt arrested in Barry Crane murder
Edwin Hiatt was arrested in Burke County, North Carolina in the 1985 murder of famous TV director Barry Crane. Did he do it? "Anything is possible back then," Hiatt said as he was being escorted in handcuffs. "I was big into drugs." Those who currently know him insist he's a great person, but the details of Crane's death remain ugly by any standard. Police in Los Angeles, California said a housekeeper found the victim dead, wrapped in bedding.
Law & Crime

Pot smuggling arrests at LAX have surged 166% since marijuana legalization
Michael Vechell had already drawn the attention of an airline worker and two passengers at Los Angeles International Airport by the time he was confronted by police. Waiting to board his Philadelphia-bound flight with his dog Odie, Vechell had sparked concern when he sidled up to another passenger and asked if she wanted to join his "drug smuggling ring," authorities say.
Los Angeles Times

Fullerton pastor charged with molesting 7 children
An Orange County pastor is due in a Santa Ana courtroom Monday on

felony charges of molesting seven children ages 5 to 15. John Rodgers McFarland, who has been the head pastor at Orangethorpe United Methodist Church in Fullerton since 2014, was arrested on a warrant Thursday charging him with seven counts of lewd and lascivious acts with a minor younger than 14 and four counts of lewd and lascivious acts with a minor 14 to 15 years old.
City News Service

Merced County CA saw more crimes than other counties
Central Valley counties, including Merced County, saw higher arrest rates than more urban counties in California. That's the finding of a report by the Public Policy Institute of California, which examined state arrest rates for all 58 California counties in 2016. The report found that, overall, counties with larger populations - urban centers like San Francisco, Los Angeles County, San Diego County and Santa Clara County - had lower rates than rural counties.
Merced Sun-Star

Los Angeles County

Barger Initiative would help county residents purchase Ring security systems
The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion by Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Hilda Solis to help residents in the county's unincorporated areas purchase home security systems with video doorbells which alerts the customer's smart device when activated. Some L.A. County cities including Arcadia, Duarte, Monterey Park, Commerce, La Canada-Flintridge, and Temple City have successfully created innovative partnerships with Ring Home Security with subsidies for customers.
SCV News

County department wins dispute with county commission
The Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services and the County Chief Executive Office yesterday prevailed in their dispute with the Los Angeles County Civil Service Commission, with the Court of Appeal for this district declaring that the commission had no authority to order an employee be granted a medical reevaluation. Presiding Justice Elwood Lui of Div. Two wrote the opinion.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Los Angeles County Sheriff

LASD changing the face of mental health policing
LASD has a long standing tradition in innovative programs to help curb the Mental Illness crisis. In November 1993, LASD was the first law enforcement agency to collaborate with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and formed a full time Mental Evaluation Team (MET). Since the initial inception of five teams, the MET concept of co-response

has grown to its current 27 team configuration and operates around the clock.
SCV News

LA Sheriff's Department on track to spend double OT budget
The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is on track to spend more than twice what it budgeted on overtime for the fiscal year set to end June 30, according to a report provided to the Board of Supervisors Tuesday. Excess overtime pay has been a problem for the department for years, long before Sheriff Alex Villanueva was elected in 2018.
California News Wire Services

Villanueva's moves draw concern from some cities that pay for L.A. Sheriff's patrols
Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva runs the nation's largest jail system and patrols 4,000 square miles of the country's most populous county. He's also head of the police force for dozens of individual cities throughout the county that contract with his agency for law enforcement services. The cities collectively paid $310 million to the Sheriff's Department this past year and have long been seen as a key source of political power.
Los Angeles Times

Sheriff's rehiring of disgraced deputies rattles contract cities
As Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva faces a crisis over his decision to hire back troubled deputies and his challenging of some policing reforms, he is getting pushback from some leaders in the cities his department patrols under contract, it was reported Monday. Those cities collectively paid $310 million to the Sheriff's Department this past year and have long been seen as a key source of political power, the Los Angeles Times reported.
California News Wire Services

Convictions

Retired LAPD officer pleads no contest to possessing child porn, faces up to 3 years
A retired Los Angeles Police Department officer pleaded no contest Monday to possessing child pornography, according to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. Clark Warren Baker, 61, faces up to three years in state prison when he is sentenced on June 21, according to prosecutors. He has been convicted of one felony count of possessing child or youth pornography.
KTLA

Gang-challenge murder leads to life sentence
The allure of gang membership leads to a life of crime. Case in point: The gang-challenge murder of Ivan Solis, 25, who was shot to death at

a local park two years ago is sending a gang banger to life in prison. Solis was shot dead in Santa Clarita Park on July 11, 2017. Los Angeles County District Attorney Prosecutors announced the 60-years-to-life sentence handed down yesterday to Nicholas Colletta (21) of Saugus, who'd issued the deadly gang challenge.
Crime Voice

Ex-con who carjacked a father, child in Encinitas gets 646-year-to-life sentence
A serial burglar who carjacked a father and 7-year-old boy in Encinitas, then forced the man at gunpoint to try to outrun pursuing deputies, was sentenced Friday to 646 years to life in prison. In October, a Vista jury convicted Joey Martin Ramos of 34 charges, including kidnapping and counts linked to a series of burglaries between late May and October 2016.
San Diego Union-Tribune

Man sentenced to 12 years in crash that killed grandmother and granddaughter
A San Gabriel man who pleaded guilty to charges stemming from a crash that fatally injured a 59-year-old woman and her 21-month-old granddaughter last October was sentenced Thursday to 12 years and four months in state prison. Dennis Anthony Perez, 48, was immediately sentenced after pleading guilty to two felony counts of vehicular manslaughter and admitting allegations that he fled from the scene of the Oct. 26, 2018, crash in a crosswalk at the intersection of Del Mar Avenue and Live Oak Street, according to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office.
City News Service

Young man's conviction upheld for USC student's killing
A state appeals court panel has upheld a young man's conviction for his role in the beating death of a USC graduate student from China who was attacked near campus while walking back to his apartment after a study session. In a ruling Monday, the three-justice panel from California's 2nd District Court of Appeal rejected the defense's contention that there were errors in the trial of Andrew Garcia, who was one of four people convicted of charges stemming from the July 24, 2014, attack on Xinran Ji.
City News Service

Sentence for killer of Long Beach woman reduced to 25 years to life
A man originally sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the 2009 stabbing death of a 76-year-old Long Beach woman was re-sentenced Monday to 25 years to life. Last year, a three-justice panel from California's 2nd District Court of Appeal upheld the convictions of Freddie Battle and Daniia Lasean Davis, who were found

guilty in May 2015 of one count each of first-degree murder, first-degree burglary with a person present and attempted residential robbery in the Jan. 31, 2009, slaying of Leam Sovanasy.
City News Service

Shoot reporters in the head: Encino suspect guilty of threats to newspaper 'enemy of the people'
An Encino man pleaded guilty Wednesday to federal charges for making violent threats against Boston Globe employees last summer in retaliation for the newspaper's editorial response to political attacks on the media. Robert D. Chain, 68, pleaded guilty in Boston to seven counts of making threatening communications in interstate commerce. U.S. District Judge William G. Young scheduled sentencing for Sept. 23, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Massachusetts.
My News LA

Death Penalty

Death penalty tensions flare again on divided U.S. Supreme Court
The U.S. Supreme Court's internal divisions over the death penalty were on full display again on Monday in fresh wrangling over how the justices handled recent attempts by two convicted murderers in Alabama and Texas to put off their executions. In both cases, there are signs that tensions over the death penalty - especially skepticism by the court's conservative majority over last-minute bids by death row inmates to block executions - are coming to a boil after simmering for years.
Reuters

Murder victims' families criticize California's moratorium on execution
Family members of murder victims whose killers were sentenced to death in California often took solace knowing that one day those prisoners could be executed. But Gov. Gavin Newsom's March 13 executive order placing a moratorium on carrying out the death penalty has taken away that consolation.
Southern California News Group

RivCo DA calls on governor to reverse death penalty moratorium
The top prosecutors for Riverside and Orange counties Thursday joined relatives of murder victims whose killers are on California's Death Row, calling on Gov. Gavin Newsom to immediately end his "intolerable" moratorium on executions and honor the will of the people. "This isn't just about the death penalty. This is about the rule of law," Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin said.
California News Wire Service

California Gov. Gavin Newsom addresses budget, death penalty in 10News interview
California Governor Gavin Newsom talked with 10News Thursday in a

one-on-one interview. He addressed key topics, including his revised budget plan for $213.5 billion in the upcoming fiscal year. The governor also talked about the death penalty in light of the Poway synagogue shooting, and if cases like it make the Governor rethink his decision to place a moratorium on the death penalty.
10News San Diego

Understanding the death penalty from state to federal levels
As the case against the Poway synagogue shooter continues, prosecutors could decide to seek the death penalty rather than life in prison. Joining KUSI to explain hot the death penalty works in California, versus the federal level, is attorney Gretchen Von Helms.
KUSI News

Consumer News

Trade war politics don't matter to counterfeiters
President Donald Trump has claimed that "trade wars are good and easy to win." There are plenty of economists and pundits who disagree with that statement. There is one group, however, that would certainly agree: counterfeit goods makers. The tariffs that the United States has imposed on Chinese imports have the effect of raising the cost to consumers of those goods. How will they respond? By looking for the same or similar goods at a lower price.
24/7 Wall St.

Counterfeits - Amazon, Etsy, eBay, Instagram, and others duping consumers and damaging innovation
Online e-commerce marketplaces are enabling and proliferating sales of counterfeit and knockoff goods by facilitating selling by third-party unvetted vendors from all over the world. Availability of counterfeit goods has shifted from underground grey markets such as sidewalk vendors and flea markets to mainstream e-commerce marketplaces.
Forbes

California / National

Investigators fault Southern California Gas in Aliso Canyon methane leak
A 2015 blowout at a natural gas well that led to the largest-known release of methane in U.S. history was the result of a corroded pipe casing and safety failures by a California utility, according to an investigation report released Friday. Southern California Gas Co. didn't investigate previous rupture causes at the Aliso Canyon storage field and didn't assess its wells for disaster potential before the Oct. 23, 2015, blowout, the report released by the California Public Utilities Commission said.
Los Angeles Times

For California's Gov. Gavin Newsom, ignoring the law has become a winning strategy
There are now 22 Democrats seeking their party's presidential nomination to run against President Trump in 2020. As the president takes to Twitter to fend them off in the same style he used to defeat 16 Republican rivals in 2016, there is another Democrat who may prove to be a bigger thorn in his side: California Gov. Gavin Newsom.
Fox News

When a reporter would not betray his source, police came to his home with guns and a sledgehammer
The banging jolted Bryan Carmody awake. Outside his San Francisco home Friday morning, the longtime journalist saw a throng of police officers with a sledgehammer, trying to break down his front gate. Carmody told the eight to 10 officers he would only let them in with a search warrant. Police confirmed a judge signed off on their barging into his home.
Los Angeles Times

Weaker than expected marijuana sales ding California budget
California is paying a price for the shaky rollout of its legal marijuana market. State budget documents released Thursday show the Newsom administration is sharply scaling back what it expects to collect in cannabis tax revenue through June 2020 - in all, a $223 million cut from projections just four months ago. The reduced income for the state treasury means that slower-than-expected pot sales are punching a hole in California's budget.
NBC4

California might triple the number of marijuana shops across state
Escalating a feud with cities over marijuana, state lawmakers are pushing to require municipalities to lift bans on cannabis stores if voters there supported Proposition 64, the 2016 initiative that legalized sale of the drug for recreational use in California. A bill moving through the Legislature would require those cities to permit at least one cannabis retailer for every four bars or restaurants with a liquor license or one for every 10,000 residents, whichever is fewer.
Los Angeles Times

In a rebuke to President Trump, Gov. Newsom pardons refugees facing deportation
California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday pardoned seven former felons, including two Cambodian refugees the Trump administration wants to deport, in his first acts of clemency since the Democrat took office in January. Newsom adopted a policy of his predecessor, former Gov. Jerry Brown, to use his state constitutional authority to issue pardons to shield immigrants targeted by federal immigration officials.

Los Angeles Times

Feds cancel nearly $1 billion for California high-speed train
The Trump administration said Thursday it would pull nearly a billion dollars in federal funding for California's much-maligned high-speed rail project, terminating an agreement that previously awarded the Golden State another $2.5 billion for the plan. The move is a major setback for proponents of the ambitious project, whose cost to taxpayers has swelled to over $77 billion as officials have stumbled to both lay out a comprehensive vision for the endeavor and produce results that inspire trust from taxpayers.
Courthouse News

Homeless

Homeless encampment cleanups: Are millions of tax dollars being wasted?
Nearly 15,000 homeless encampment cleanups were conducted last year in Los Angeles, a process that begins with officers clearing people from the area before sanitation workers remove trash and other items. The cleanups cost taxpayers millions of dollars, but some residents who live near the encampments said they are usually repopulated soon after sanitation crews are done.
NBC4

LA County supes expand innovative program proven to break the wash, rinse, repeat pattern of mental illness, incarceration, and homelessness
On Tuesday, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed the county's Office of Diversion and Reentry to draft a plan for expanding the ODR's innovative program designed to break the cycle of mental illness, incarceration, and homelessness, by diverting inmates with serious mental health issues and substance abuse disorders from jail and providing them with intensive case management and supportive housing - a strategy that supporters say has consistently managed to change lives for far fewer dollars than the cost of a stay in LA County jail or in a county hospital.
Witness LA

LA County Board of Supervisors outlines millions in spending on homeless initiatives
Members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday outlined Measure H's millions of dollars in spending on homeless initiatives. There are 53,000 homeless people in the county, whose leaders are trying to get them off the streets. "It's clear with everything we are doing we have to make housing available throughout Los Angeles County," County Supervisor Janice Hahn said.
ABC7

Guns

Los Angeles City Councilman looks to include rifles in city's safe storage law

Following recent charges brought against a Pacoima father who allegedly kept several weapons unsecured in the family home, a Los Angeles City Council member introduced a motion Tuesday seeking an expansion of the city's safe storage ordinance to include all firearms and not only handguns.
City News Service

The NRA and the battle against itself

As gun violence erupted across the country over the weekend, the nation's foremost gun lobby struggled with one of its biggest crises in decades. The bitter leadership battle - centered on the finances and management of the National Rifle Association - comes as the political landscape on guns undergoes dramatic change: Gun safety groups are growing more powerful and mounting more forceful challenges to the NRA.
CNN

Corrections

Newsom proposes expansive new strategy to combat drug addiction spike in State prisons

Gov. Gavin Newsom is pushing for California to spend more than $233 million over the next two years to battle substance abuse in the state's roughly three dozen prisons, an effort to stem the increasing frequency of inmate overdoses in recent years. The governor's revised budget includes more than $71 million this year and nearly $162 million the following year to help treat prisoners battling with addiction.
KQED

Child molester who faked 2015 suicide on Golden Gate Bridge captured in Florida, cops say

The disheveled, sunburned man found living in a Key West storage trailer May 3 gave investigators a name: William Wallace Littlejohn. Monroe County sheriff's deputies, who went to the Stock Island Marina around 1:30 a.m. that morning to investigate a burglar alarm, said they found Littlejohn living in an unlocked trailer next to the building they were investigating.
Cox Media Group

Pensions

Governor boosts school pension cost relief plan

School districts, some saying CalSTRS rates are forcing cuts in programs and teacher pay, would get more pension cost relief under a revised state budget proposed last week by Gov. Newsom. The governor's $700

million plan to lower school pension costs during the last two years of a seven-year CalSTRS rate increase would get an additional $150 million, if approved by the Legislature.
Calpensions

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